

Joint Parliament-Council-Commission press release on the codecision procedure (7 November 2000)


Caption: Joint press release by the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, after the seminar organised by the three institutions in Brussels on 6 and 7 November 2000, evaluating the operation of the codecision procedure following the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam.

Source: PRESS OFFICE/NEWSROOM. [EN LIGNE]. [Bruxelles]: Conseil de l'Union européenne, [29.08.2001]. Communication à la presse. Disponible sur <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/main.cfm?LANG=2>.

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URL:
http://www.cvce.eu/obj/joint_parliament_council_commission_press_release_on_the_codecision_procedure_7_november_2000-en-b060foef-3163-4ff4-8c4a-687ec2a1982d.html

Last updated: 05/07/2016



Joint European Parliament–Council–Commission seminar, 6 and 7 November 2000, on the operation of the codecision procedure after the Amsterdam Treaty

On the initiative of the European Parliament, a joint European Parliament–Council–Commission seminar on the above subject was held at the European Parliament in Brussels on 6 and 7 November 2000. At the end of the seminar, the three institutions issued the following joint press release:

‘The codecision procedure works! That was the main conclusion reached by the three institutions’ representatives at the end of the joint seminar held on the premises of the European Parliament in Brussels under the co-chairmanship of Mr Imbeni, Mr Provan and Mr Friedrich, Vice-Presidents of the European Parliament.

The Amsterdam Treaty came into force on 1 May 1999. *Inter alia*, it extended the scope of the codecision procedure and made it possible for it to be concluded at first reading. For better workability, the three institutions adopted a Joint Declaration on 4 May 1999 on practical arrangements for the new codecision procedure. That has been the basis for enhanced cooperation between Parliament, the Council and the Commission in an effort to cope with the increasing number of procedures since the Amsterdam Treaty came into force, 65 having been completed in the first year as opposed to an average of 30 a year over the previous five years.

With regard to first and second readings, the codecision procedure has been radically altered by the increasing contacts between the three institutions to exploit the potential for concluding the procedure at those stages. To date, 14 legislative acts have been adopted at first reading and 38 at second, the most recent case in point being the ‘local loop’ regulation to facilitate access to Internet and multimedia services.

A **new legislative culture** has thus developed between the joint legislative authorities, in partnership with the Commission, each authority now taking account of how negotiations have progressed in the other institution.

With regard to the conciliation procedure, the seminar found that the arrangements for preparing Conciliation Committee meetings, and the meetings themselves, were now running smoothly, but that improvements were required in the way in which timetabling was handled.

With a view to improving the visibility and transparency of the codecision procedure, the seminar called for improved communication concerning codecision proceedings and their outcome. The public must be fully informed about Community codecision legislation, since, in many instances, it has a direct impact on daily life.

To be more precise, the following points were cited, by way of illustration, as being particularly relevant to the three themes referred to above:

First and second readings:

- Extension of work planning arrangements involving the Chairman-in-Office of Coreper and the parliamentary committee chairmen, including the drawing up of parallel timetables;
- Improvement in communication and coordination between the institutions so as to promote contacts at first and second readings;
- More structured organisational arrangements for tripartite meetings (Parliament, the Council and the Commission) so as to facilitate the completion of the procedure as soon as possible.

Conciliation:

- Possibility of setting aside a specific day or half-day each week for conciliation-related meetings;
- Solution to be found to the question of breaks in legislative activity, in particular in August, which poses problems in managing the new time limits laid down by the Amsterdam Treaty;
- Limiting the number of formal meetings of the Conciliation Committee, in particular by means of written procedures which allow the two joint legislative authorities to exchange positions.

Visibility and transparency:

- Ensuring that texts are comprehensible by checking the drafting quality of the texts emerging from the codecision procedure;
- Publishing progress updates on all codecision items, in particular on the outcome of Conciliation Committee negotiations, on the institutions' websites;
- Regular progress reports for the media on codecision legislative procedures.'